



Greenline – Spartanburg Neighborhood Revitalization



APPENDIX

Interviews

Interviews were conducted prior to the conceptual design phase to acquire information from residents, city officials and property owners. It was time provided for those in the communities to tell Woolpert what they feel are the good and bad characteristics of the neighborhoods as they currently exist. Likewise, they provided ideas of what they, as current residents, felt should be implemented in the redevelopment of a united community. There were three groups of citizens interviewed.

These groups were interviewed over the course of visit to Greenville, June 16th, 2000.

The first group consisted of realtors and property owners. The following were in attendance at this first interview session:

- Roy M. Gullick, *Greenville, SC*
- Todd Hardaway, Central Realty Co., *Greenville, SC*
- Alan Landreth, City of Greenville
- Dick Locke, *Greenville, SC*
- Steve Loftis, Tinsley R. E., *Greenville, SC*
- Kenn Bullock, ASLA, Woolpert, LLP
- Laura Kaminski, Woolpert, LLP

The following items were discussed:

- It is important that the Greenline and Spartanburg Neighborhoods become one and also connect to the surrounding neighborhoods. Not sure that Dupont and Harrington neighborhoods want to be joined with them.
- Looking at connections to Timmons Park. The group thinks there would be some opposition from other neighborhood in connecting to Timmons Park.
- Zoning problem with 25' and 30' lot widths, need to get away from lots this small.
- Minimum lot sizes should be around 6,000-7,000 square feet, like in similar developments, with a minimum lot width of 50'.
- Selective streets should be removed to improve circulation.
- Possible goal to input low to moderate housing. Fears that this would inhibit development of upper income housing.
- Should consider middle class, styles of housing.
- The group feels that the Greenline-Spartanburg Neighborhood is the prettiest location in Greenville.
- In order to change the Greenline-Spartanburg area, you need to take care of the current problems such as the drug traffic and loitering. Increased police presence is needed.
- Make the area less dense with enhanced streetscapes and more sidewalks and greenspace.
- Improved Infrastructure and street lighting need to be addressed to allow for a better image.
- One realtor's property was recently renovated, but unfortunately burnt due to the tenant's use of propane heat. The property owner will not rebuild unless the neighborhood and city work together to improve conditions in the neighborhood.

- Renovation needs to be done simultaneously throughout the community to make an apparent difference instead of a by-house basis.
- The steep, overgrown drainage corridor dividing the community needs to be thinned and restored to retain a natural appearance. This would alleviate the invasive growth of vegetation and dumping nuisance that currently occurs.
- Need to enhance connection between Timmons and Cleveland Parks.
- Apartments that were built new in the 70's have never been fully occupied. There are 3 apartments with 33 units. Property managers have had difficulty commanding the rent needed. Thus, most have had a very high turnover.
- Home ownership in this area is less than 10%. The city needs to explore the possibility of using new options for ownership. There is a possibility that Section 8 funds for subsidized income for home ownership could be used.
- Habitat for Humanity would be a good demonstration program for the area.
- Thick, invasive vegetation has been known to harbor much of the crime in the area.
- Biggest negative is some of the neighborhoods' own residents.
- The perceived "front door" entrance to the community is located off of East North and is in need of renovation and enhancement.
- Need to improve entrance off of Wade Hampton to Dupont Street.
- Stay away from high density housing in the area.
- Selected structures should be removed while others should be renovated.
- There would be a benefit to using primarily single family housing (in the range of \$40-50,000 per unit). This cost range was used at the Viola neighborhood renovation. Renters are more likely to take care of single-family homes rather than apartments.
- It is thought that residents would be more inclined to better care for their property if they had the opportunity to own their own homes.
- It is very important to drive the price of housing down so residents can better afford them. This needs to be tied to a City subsidy program.

The second group consisted of city staff. The following were in attendance at this first interview session:

- Myron Alderman, City of Greenville, Police
- Daniel F. Durig, City of Greenville, Public Works
- Paul Ellis, City of Greenville, Parks and Recreation
- Norm Gollub, City of Greenville, Economic Development
- Tom McDowell, City of Greenville, Fire
- Mike Ridgeway, City of Greenville, Traffic Engineer
- Wes Wagner, City of Greenville
- Kenn Bullock, ASLA, Woolpert, LLP, *Charlotte, NC*
- Laura Kaminski, Woolpert, LLP, *Charlotte, NC*

The following items were discussed:

- Though located within a flood prone area, the greenspace to the rear of The Big Clock restaurant across Richland Creek is one location that could be considered for a city owned parkspace.

- There are currently three different parks and recreation facilities in and around the communities. Overbrook Greenway and Valley, Railroad Street Park (Greenline), and the David Helms Community Center are within this area. Timmons Park and Cleveland Park are adjacent to the site.
- A greenway tie to Timmons at Dupont is desired. Currently, residents use streets as a sidewalk.
- Could try to implement a greenway in the vicinity of the abandoned floodplain at Richland Creek at East North Street to serve as a tie to Cleveland and McPherson Parks.
- Mr. Ellis feels that there is a need to tie the different parks to the neighborhood, however a greenway would be difficult to prove effective. This would be due to the overgrown appearance of the drainage corridor and natural areas.
- More land around the Community Center off of Spartanburg is desired. It currently has a building and staff. Facilities are claimed to be inadequate. These include a softball field that is too small and basketball courts have had little success in serving multi-use as tennis facilities. It is thought that these could be converted to parking.
- Basketball is the biggest draw. It serves the community in greater numbers than the summer playground, morning senior programs, and tutorial programs.
- Railroad Mini park is good for kids under 12. There are fewer incidents of vehicular conflicts, as children rarely have to cross streets.
- Community gardens worked once on Spartanburg Street. Now there is a need for someone to control this effort. This could be a viable option for future development.
- There are unsupervised, latchkey children in need of after school programs with supervision and discipline.
- East Street Elementary and Greenville Middle School are the schools for the neighborhood.
- The drainage corridor could also have a wetland component.

Myron Alderman, Police

- Drug traffic and vandalism, especially to site lighting, are problems within the neighborhood, especially around the Community Center. This is a good lookout point for police, with a road that goes all the way through the neighborhood.
- Police strongly encourage the removal of a nightclub where Mountain Top Café is located now.
- A connection between the two neighborhoods is desired.
- A park would be visible at the southern portion of the site, at East North and East Stone Avenue in the flood prone area. It would be a good observable location of the Overlooks and the I-385 areas.
- There have been security problems with Timmons Park. It is felt that police would run into similar problems with Greenways. People have been known to hide in dark areas and access the park after hours.
- Police feel that a main problem associated with a greenway through the neighborhood connecting Timmons and Cleveland Park is that of neighborhood access after dark. Parks in the City of Greenville are closed at dusk.
- Expand vision on traffic calming.
- Restrict the number of entrances but still have access to the area. "Straight through-flow" on Spartanburg Street is prime for drug dealers and because the Community Center is public property, they can legally socialize in this vicinity.

Tom McDowell, Fire Chief

- If parallel parking is provided, access to an emergency can be blocked. It is desired that no parking be allowed on the streets.
- The lack of connection between the two communities is a hindrance in an emergency situation. Emergency management cannot access Greenline from Spartanburg without leaving one community before entering another.
- It is difficult to organize people when neighborhoods perceive themselves as separate. Greenline does not think they are part of Spartanburg and its Community Center and visa versa.
- Housing stock is marginal. Single family housing with larger lots is better for fire protection.
- Code allows landowners to board up dilapidated houses to secure them. Only if housing is condemned as an unsafe structure, will it be torn down. There have been problems with residents using scrap from abandoned houses for firewood.
- Twenty-six feet is the desired road width for fire trucks.
- By record, the fire department has responded quickly to emergency situations within the communities.
- The Fire Department would like no apartments above two floors.
- Homeownership has been known to reduce the amount of fires.

Daniel Durig, Public Works

- Homeownership on the western side of the community has improved neighborhood conditions within this immediate vicinity.
- Standards with zoning need to be changed. Thoughts on neo-traditional neighborhoods are encouraged despite lower densities.
- Consider a bus route through a redeveloped, united community.
- Space and routes for garbage pick-up should be encouraged.
- There are problems associated with sections of the existing sanitary sewer. A lot of people resort to joining onto their neighbor's system.
- Storm water has NOT been master planned. Neighborhood storm water design is a typically feasible route. Consider wet detention as a possibility.
- Mr. Ellis stated that dry detention is better for park maintenance for there is liability.
- There is a potential for flooding at North Church Street and East North Street and Stone.
- Overall the communities' biggest problem is circulation.

The third group consisted of residents from the Greenline-Spartanburg neighborhoods. The following were in attendance at this first interview session:

- James Brown, Deacon, Mount Emanuel Baptist Church, *Greenville, SC*
- Mary Cleveland, *Greenville, SC*
- Evelyn E. Dogan, *Greenville, SC*
- Walter Dogan, *Greenville, SC*
- Reverend D. L. Holland, *Greenville, SC*
- Mary Love, *Greenville, SC*
- Henry Nuttry, Westside Properties, *Greenville, SC*
- Tracy M. Truscott, City of Greenville, Police
- Kenn Bullock, ASLA, Woolpert, LLP
- Laura Kaminski, Woolpert, LLP

The following items were discussed:

- The neighborhood association is referred to as Greenline-Spartanburg Street Community Organization.
- Residents want to see the two neighborhoods united as one community.
- An “updated” neighborhood over a “destroyed” neighborhood is preferred.
- Residents strongly desire the ability for neighbors that take pride in the community to return after displacement and completion of the redevelopment.
- A higher, owner occupancy rate is strongly desired.
- Currently, if residents relocate from Mt. Zion to Spartanburg Street, it is considered progress.
- Residents would like to have sidewalks and better roads.
- Progress would be felt within the neighborhood should the redevelopment commence.
- Single family homes are strongly preferred over multi-family apartments.
- Currently most homesites do not meet local code. Renters fear that if their homes are updated to meet codes, landlords and property managers may raise rent.
- Residents would like access to a grocery store and Laundromat, but not in the neighborhood. It is recommended it be located along the outside edge of the community. Residents could be provided an opportunity to own a store on the perimeter.
- Most members of the two churches are from outside the neighborhood (the two churches in the communities were once home churches).
- A Police Substation in the Community Center could strongly benefit the neighborhood (with required direct access to the outdoors). This would be temporary while the neighborhood was in transition.
- Senior housing is recommended in Hollywood Circle. It is important that these homes be handicap accessible. Seniors want to be independent.
- It would be nice to have the Police Substation next to senior housing.
- Selective housing removal is suggested while others should be renovated.